

Improving Long-Term Care Access for Seniors

April 11, 2016

The Ontario Medical Students Association (OMSA) represents the views and concerns of the province's 3500 medical school students from all six universities. As Ontario's future doctors, we believe that improving long-term care (LTC) access for seniors should be a priority in the context of an aging Canadian population. As the Ontario government seeks to reopen health care legislation this spring, we have identified three key long-term care issues that should be addressed directly and urgently.

1) OMSA recommends that the MOHLTC develop a comprehensive wait times strategy in consultation with appropriate stakeholders to address system challenges for long-term care placement.

- Ontario's waitlist for LTC beds as of May 2015: **23 443** [1]
- Median wait times are **69 days** for hospital patients and **116 days** for patients at home (2014), and have increased over the last ten years [2]
- Wait times dramatically vary by LHIN region (243 days for home patients in Toronto Central) [2]
- Left unchecked, the number of individuals on the waitlist will double to 48 000 in six years [3]
- **A comprehensive waitlist strategy includes:** active waitlist management, incentives to balance the waitlist variation, and needs-based assessments to better allocate resources
- **Stakeholders include:** LHINs, CCACs, and Ontario's LTC home associations

2) OMSA recommends that the MOHLTC improve the Enhanced Long-term Care Home Renewal Strategy (ELTCHRS) to provide timely, regular, and predictable funding for the renovation of long-term care homes that do not meet current regulatory standards, and set a timeline of five (5) years for completing these renovations.

- **40% of LTC care beds** do not currently meet standards set in the *Long-Term Care Homes Act, 2007*
- Newer standards help to ensure the safety, comfort, and privacy of residents
- **Only 5000 of 35 000 targeted beds** were renovated through the *Long-Term Care Home Renewal Strategy* from 2007 to 2014 [4]
- ELTCHRS (October 2014) updated incentives with the aim of renovating the remaining 30 000 LTC beds
- From Oct 2014 to Jan 2016, out of 300 LTC homes that require renovation, **only 22 applications were submitted** and just **6 LTC home projects were approved** [5]
- ELTCHRS should be improved by identifying a **clear source of funding that is set aside explicitly** for LTC home renovations, while adapting to different LTC home needs and improving cost-efficiency
- Funding should be delivered urgently and the **renovations completed in the next 5 years** (by 2021)

3) OMSA recommends that the MOHLTC maintain and support the role of case managers to coordinate services in both home care and long-term care settings, especially through the transition period of implementing new healthcare legislation.

- Case managers are key contributors to improving patient care and outcomes
- Case managers integrate multidisciplinary care across the healthcare continuum
- Seniors and their families should always have **timely access to case managers**, including through any transitions in service delivery

For further information, contact OMSA at representation@omsa.ca.

[1] Ontario Long Term Care Association (2015). *Facts and Figures*. www.oltpca.com/oltpca/OLTPCA/LongTermCare/OLTPCA/Public/LongTermCare/FactsFigures.aspx

[2] Health Quality Ontario (2015). *Measuring Up 2015*. www.hqontario.ca/portals/0/Documents/pr/measuring-up-2015-en.pdf

[3] Ontario Association of Non-profit Homes and Services for Seniors (2015). *Wait Times Strategy and Other Recommendations*. www.oanhss.org/MediaCentre2/PositionPapers/July_2015_OANHSS_Submission.aspx

[4] MOHLTC (2015). *Enhanced Long-Term Care Home Renewal Strategy - Ontario*. www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/ltpcredev/docs/eltchrs_faq.pdf

[5] Ontario Long-term Care Association (2016). *Action for Seniors: Four priorities to keep Ontario from failing its seniors in long-term care*. www.oltpca.com/OLTPCA/Documents/Reports/2016OLTPCABudgetSubmission.pdf